ON FATE.

PREFACE BY THE ORIGINAL TRANSLATOR.

Of all the treatises on Fate which have come down to us from antiquity, this essay of Cicero's is the most valuable. Cicero regards Fate or Destiny as the decree of God, the dictum of Providence. But he supposes that it is essentially conditional, and it goes hand in hand with free-will, since free-will is one condition of Fate itself. He therefore agrees with the fathers of the first three centuries in their doctrine of free-will, so admirably explained by Erasmus and Leibnitz. While on one side he defends the decrees of Deity, on the other he defends the liberty of man in a qualified sense, and rescues his readers at once from impiety and fatalism. In this brief treatise will be found the germs of most of the arguments that have been so elaborately extended by more recent writers, who, while they have done much to elucidate the subject, have done yet more to obscure it.

[*The commencement of this treatise is lost.*]

I. * * * That branch of philosophy which, because it relates to manners, the Greeks usually term ethics,[1] the Latins have hitherto called the philosophy of manners. But it may be well for one who designs to enrich the Latin language, to call it moral science. And here we have to explain the nature and force of certain propositions which the Greeks term axioms (ἀξιώματα). When these propositions relate to the future, and speak of possibilities and impossibilities, it is difficult to determine their precise force. Such propositions necessarily refer to the amount of possibility, and are only resolvable by logic, which I call the art of reasoning. But I cannot avail myself in this essay on Fate of the method I employed in that other style of mine in which I discussed the Nature of the Gods, or in the book which I published on the doctrine of Divination: in which treatises the sentiments of each philosophic school are explained in a continuous discourse; in order that each reader might the more easily adopt that opinion which appeared to him the more probable. In the present work I am compelled to adopt another mode of argumentation, for the following reason.—For when I was spending some time at Puteoli, Hirtius

[1] From ἦθος.

Pansa, the consul elect, and a most intimate friend of my own, who was greatly devoted to these studies, which have been my delight from childhood upwards, was there too, and we were a great deal together, and the principal topic of our conferences was the best method of establishing peace and concord among our fellow-citizens. For after Cæsar's death certain individuals sought every pretext to excite new disturbances, and we were extremely anxious to prevent and frustrate their machinations, and nearly all our conversations were devoted to those deliberations; and one day when I was more at leisure than usual, and less interrupted by visits, Hirtius called to see me, and our discourse turned on the daily, and I may almost say legitimate subject of peace and tranquillity.

II. And after some time, he said,—Since you have not, as I hope, abandoned your oratorical studies, my Cicero, and though you have no doubt preferred philosophy to them, I should like to hear you now illustrate some leading philosophical problem. You may, replied I, either hear me discuss such, or argue it yourself; for you are quite right in supposing that I have not abandoned my oratorical studies, for which I have also been the means of exciting your own inclination; although I partially found you originally very much attached to it; nor, in fact, do the philosophical studies in which I am now most interested, impair that faculty, but I may rather say that they increase it. For the orator has a great affinity to this system of philosophy which we follow; for he borrows subtlety from the Academy, and in return he imparts to it a certain richness of expression, and copiousness of ornament. Therefore, continued I, since we are equally possessed of oratory and philosophy, your choice shall determine the subject of our conversation. What you say, replied Hirtius, is very pleasing to me, and like everything that you utter, for your inclinations are never at variance with my desires. But as I have been already largely instructed in oratory, and have heard you often, and am likely again to hear you enlarge on the rhetorical art, and as I see by your Tusculan Disputations that you have adopted the Academic method of investigation, by arguing against all propositions; I will therefore now, if you have no objection, propose a subject on which I am

eager to have your opinion. Can I, I replied, find any objection to anything which will give you pleasure? Do not, however, forget that I am a Roman, and as such naturally timid when approaching this kind of argument, and recurring to such studies only after a long interval, and discussing metaphysical topics. I will listen to you, replied he, while you speak on this intricate topic, with the same friendly disposition with which I read your writing; so begin.[1] * * *

III. Let us consider here * * * in some of which, as in the case of Antipater the poet, or of those who are born on the day of the winter solstice, or of two brothers who are ill at the same time, or as in the urine, or the nails, and other things of the same kind, the influence of nature prevails, which I am far from denying; I only say that there is here no appearance of fate. In other cases, some things may be purely fortuitous; as in that case of shipwreck in the adventures of Icadius and Daphitas. Some of these stories indeed (if I may thus speak without offence to my master) appear to be the invention of Posidonius, and some are downright absurd. For what shall I say?—if it was the fate of Daphitas to fall from a horse and to lose his life by the fall, still can he have been predestined to fall from this particular horse, which was no horse at all, but only a rock which was called "The Horse?" And when the oracle warned Philip to beware of a four-horsed chariot, did it signify that miniature chariot carved on the handle of the sword which slew him? Why should we be surprised that a certain nameless person after having escaped shipwreck was drowned in a river? When the oracle forewarned him that he should perish by water, did it indicate the particular stream which proved fatal to him? And in the adventure of the robbed Icadius, I see no trace of what you call destiny, for no special prediction was fulfilled in his death. It is nothing very wonderful that a piece of rock from the cavern should have fallen on his legs; for I suppose that this rock would still have fallen if Icadius had not been in the cavern just at that time. For either there is nothing whatever fortuitous, or else such an accident as this may have been such. I ask then—and this principle is capable of extensive application—if there were absolutely no such name, no such nature, and no such influence as that of

[1] A good deal of the original is lost here.

Fate, and if, as a general rule, the majority of events, or every event, happened at random and by chance, would they happen otherwise than they do? Why then should we always resort to Fate, when without any such principle the cause of every event may be fairly referred to nature, or to fortune?

IV. Let us, however, as we fairly may, dismiss Posidonius, without any offence to him, and turn our attention to the sophisms of Chrysippus. And first let us answer those difficulties which he finds in the sympathy of things; and his other objections we will take afterwards. In the climates of different countries we observe a great variety; some are healthy, others unwholesome. In some, the animal constitution becomes phlegmatic, and as it were exuberant; in others, dry and arid. And there are a great many other very considerable differences between place and place. At Athens the air is delicate, which is supposed to render the Athenians clever. In Thebes it is gross and heavy, and the Bœotians are proverbially sturdy and stupid. Yet the subtle air of Attica cannot be the cause why some pupils follow Zeno, others Arcesilas, others Theophrastus. And the density of the Theban atmosphere can never cause a Theban athlete to aim at victory in the Nemean games rather than in the Isthmian. And to come nearer home,—what influence can the nature of our climate have to make me prefer a walk in the portico of Pompey, rather than in the field of Mars? and in your society, rather than that of another? or at the period of the ides, rather than the calends? As, then, the nature of the situations has some effect upon some things, and none upon others, so also the influence of the stars may, if you please, account for some phenomena, but certainly not for all. But, Chrysippus would reply, since there are dissimilarities in the natures of men, so that some persons like sweet things, others prefer what is bitter; some are libidinous, others irascible, or cruel, or proud, while others recoil from such faults; since, then, he would say, one constitution is so different from another, what is the wonder if these diversities result from different causes?

V. While he argues in this way, he shows that he does not understand the true question, nor its principal difficulties. For, allowing that different men have different inclinations,

owing to anterior natural causes, yet it does not follow on that account that the causes of our wills and desires are also natural and anterior, for if that were the case nothing whatever would be in our own power. At present we confess that it does not depend upon ourselves to be clever or stupid, robust or weak; but he who thinks that it therefore follows that it does not depend upon our own will whether we shall sit or walk, is plainly ignorant of what consequences flow from what premises. For although it may be owing to antecedent causes that men are born clever or stupid, powerful or weak, still it does not follow that it is defined and settled by principal causes, whether they are to sit, or walk, or do any particular thing.

Stilpo, a philosopher of Megara, a particularly shrewd man, and famous enough in his day, was, according to the account of his friends, vehemently addicted to wine and women. Nor do they mention this to diminish his credit, but to illustrate his virtue; for they assert that his philosophy so tamed and subdued his vicious nature that no one ever saw in him the slightest trace of drunkenness or debauchery. Need I say more? Have we not all heard what judgment Zopyrus, the physiognomist, who had pretended to ascertain the dispositions and habits of men by the inspection of their bodies, countenances, foreheads, and eyes, pronounced upon Socrates, affirming that he was stupid and dull, because his throat was protuberant, saying that these parts were obstructed and blocked up? He added that Socrates was decidedly lascivious respecting women; at which Alcibiades is reported to have laughed heartily. But such vicious inclinations may arise from natural causes, and yet for them to be so extirpated and entirely eradicated, that a person who was originally inclined to them may have wholly repressed their influence, would not depend so much on natural causes as on energy of will, study and discipline; all which things are discarded if the power and nature of fate is to be confirmed on principles of divination.

VI. If you insist on the reality of divination, I once more ask, from what perceptions of art does it proceed? I call those things perceptions, which the Greeks call theorems (*θεωρήματα*). For I do not suppose that any other workmen employ no perceptions in their work, or that those who use

divination can really predict futurity. The axioms of the astrologers, then, are something of this sort; "If any one," say they, "is born at the period when the dog-star rises, he will never be drowned in the sea." Take care, Chrysippus, and defend your cause as well as you can, for Diodorus, a powerful logician, will have a great contest with you on this subject. For if the argument thus connectedly stated be true—If any one is born at the rising of the dog-star, he shall not perish in the sea; then it is true—If Fabius was born at the rising of the dog-star, Fabius could not perish in the sea. There is, therefore, a contradiction between these two clauses, that Fabius was born at the rising of the dog-star, and that Fabius will die in the sea. This conjunction, then, consists of repugnant clauses,—Fabius does exist, and Fabius will die in the sea; which, in the way in which it was stated, is impossible: therefore, this statement, that Fabius will die in the sea, is of that kind which is impossible. Every proposition, then, relative to the future, which is false, in fact must be regarded as impossible.

VII. This consequence, however, is by no means agreeable to you, O Chrysippus, and this very point is your main dispute with Diodorus: for this philosopher only admits that to be possible which is either true or will be true; and whatever will be true, that he says is unavoidable; and whatever will not be true, that he says is impossible. You both regard as possible that which will never happen, as, for instance, that this precious stone may be broken, though it never will be; and you deny that it was inevitable that Cypselus should reign at Corinth, although Apollo's oracle had predicted such a fact a thousand years before. But if you approve of these divine predictions, then you will also look upon what are falsely predicted as future events, as things which it is impossible should come to pass—as, for instance, if it were said that Scipio Africanus shall conquer Africa, and if this statement is realized,—then you must assert that it was unavoidable; and this agrees with the opinion of Diodorus which is opposed to yours. But if that conditional proposition is true, If you are born at the rising of the dog-star, you can never be drowned in the sea; and if the first clause of this proposition is necessary (for in past propositions all statements which are true are necessary, according to Chrysippus, who disagrees with his master

Cleanthes, because they are immutable, and because what is past cannot be changed from true to false)—if the first member of the conditional proposition be necessary, the consequent is also necessary: although Chrysippus denies the universal applicability of this principle. Still, however, if there is any natural cause why Fabius will not die in the sea, then Fabius cannot die in the sea.

VIII. On this topic Chrysippus exerts all his ingenuity. He pretends that the Chaldeans are deceived as much as other diviners; and that they cannot avail themselves of conditional propositions like the foregoing—"If any one is born under the dog-star he cannot be drowned in the sea." He would rather have them announce the prognostic in this fashion,—"It is not the case that if any one is born under the dog-star he will be drowned in the sea." What an excellent joke! Rather than agree with the rational Diodorus, he sets about instructing the Chaldeans how they should frame their responses. I ask, then, if the Chaldeans should allow themselves to change affirmative indefinites into negative indefinite conjunctives, why may not the professors of medicine and mathematics, and other sciences, do the same? Above all men the physician will no longer propose what he is certain of in his art in this fashion, "If any man's veins are agitated in this manner, he has a fever;" but thus, "This man's veins are not agitated in this way, and therefore, he has not a fever." Again, the mathematician will no longer say, "In the sphere, when we describe great circles, they divide themselves into equal parts in the centre;" but rather, "It is not the case that when we do describe great circles in the sphere, they do not divide themselves into equal parts in the centre." What proposition is there which, by the employment of such means, cannot be changed from a conditional affirmative into a negative conjunctive? And, indeed, we might bring out the same results in other manners. I said just now—"In the sphere great circles divide themselves equally in the centre:" I might say, "In the sphere great circles will be formed;" or I might say, "Because in the sphere great circles will be formed." There are many ways of enunciating a proposition, but there is no more distorted one than that which Chrysippus wishes the Chaldeans to put up with in order to please. But there is no

danger of their adopting it; for it would be harder to understand these contortions of phraseology, than to learn with precision the rising and setting of every star in the heavens.

IX. But let us return to the question concerning *possibility*, so warmly contested by Diodorus, in which the question is examined, What is the signification of the term possible? Diodorus asserts that nothing is possible, except what either is true or is going to be so. This statement comes to this, that nothing happens which is not unavoidable; and that every thing which is possible either exists now, or will exist; and that things future, being certain, can no more be changed from true to false than things past; but that in things already past, the impossibility of change is very apparent; but that in things future, as they do not yet appear, we cannot equally discern that immutability. For instance, we may say with truth, of a person attacked by a mortal disease—This person will die of this malady; and if this same thing were to be said with equal truth of another person in whom the same violence of disease is not apparent, it will certainly happen as well as it will in the case of the other. Hence, we affirm that even in the case of future things, for instance, there cannot possibly be any change from true to false. This proposition, "Scipio will die," has such force, that although we announce a future event, it is still such an one that it cannot be converted into a false one, for it is said of a man, and all men are sure to die.

But if it were said, "Scipio will die in his bed during the night by the hand of his enemy," it might still be said with truth, as it might be about to happen; but it can only be known to have been about to happen from the fact that it has happened. Nor was it more true to say, Scipio will die, than to say, Scipio will die in such and such a manner; and his death itself was not less inevitable than the circumstances which attended it. Nor was it more possible to alter from true to false, the statement of, "Scipio has been slain," than this, "Scipio will be slain." Nor, since this is the case, do I see any reason why Epicurus has such a horror of Fate or Destiny, and why he flies for assistance to his atoms, and leads them out of the way, and why he endeavours to establish two inexplicable principles at the same time: first, that anything is

produced without cause, from which it will follow that nothing can produce something; an opinion adopted neither by Epicurus himself nor by any other natural philosopher: secondly, that when two atoms move in empty space, one proceeds in a right line, and the other in an oblique.

For Epicurus, granting as he does that every proposition is either true or false, ought not to have hesitated to admit that everything eventually takes places in consequence of Fate. For there are no natural causes flowing from the necessity of things which determine the truth of this proposition. Carneades came down into the Academy. This fact was not without its causes; but we must distinguish between those antecedent causes which depend on chance, and those efficient causes which contain a physical energy and influence. Thus this proposition was always true and certain, "Epicurus will die at the age of seventy-two, in the Archonship of Pitharatus." And yet there were no fatal causes which determined this event: but since it took place we may be sure that it necessarily happened in the way it did. And those who affirm that things future are immutable, and that things true and certain cannot become false and uncertain, ought not to be regarded as the partisans of strict fatalism, since they are only explaining the meaning of words. But those philosophers who introduce a chain of eternal causes of absolute necessity, despoil the human soul of its free-will, and bind it hand and foot in the necessity of fate.

X. This is all that we need say concerning possibility. Let us pass on to other matters.

Chrysippus adopts this mode of reasoning. If any motion exists without a cause, then it is not the case that every proposition called an axiom by the logicians, is neither logically true nor false. For that which has not efficient causes, is neither true nor false. Now, every proposition is either true or false. If it be so, then all effects owe their existence to anterior causes. This once admitted, we must grant that all things are governed by fate. It follows therefore that everything which happens, happens by fate. Here let me take the liberty for a moment to agree with Epicurus, and deny that every proposition is either true or false. I would rather expose myself to criticism for this, than grant that fate governs all things. For this last opinion is entirely

untenable, while the former is merely doubtful. Therefore Chrysippus strains all his energies to prove that every proposition must be true or false. For as Epicurus fears that by conceding this point, he may be obliged to admit that everything happens through fate, since the truth or falsehood of any given proposition existing from all eternity, must be certain in one sense or other, and if certain, then necessary according to the necessity of fate; and so he thinks that necessity and fate are established: so Chrysippus, on the other hand, fears that, if he cannot establish his point that every proposition is either true or false, then it will be impossible to prove that everything is done in consequence of fate, and of the eternal causes of all future events.

Epicurus, however, thinks that the necessity of fate is avoided by his fortuitous concourse of atoms. Hence arises a third motion beside those of gravity and percussion—attraction and repulsion, by which atoms pass through minute spaces. Epicurus calls it ἐλάχιστος or infinitesimal. And he is compelled in fact, if not in express words, to confess that this is an effect without a cause. For an atom moves not by the impulse impressed on it by another atom. For how can one atom be impelled by another, if they are all, as Epicurus asserts, borne perpendicularly downwards in straight lines by the force of gravity? For it follows, that if none of these bodies is ever impelled by another, then no contact can exist between them. From all which it appears that even if an atom exists, and varies from its straight course, it varies without a cause. Epicurus adopted this idea because he was afraid that if he granted that atoms always move by a natural and necessary attraction, he should deprive man of his liberty. The soul experiences no motions but those it might receive from the irresistible impulse of atoms. And from this consideration, Democritus, the author of the Atomic Philosophy, preferred admitting the necessity of fate to depriving indivisible bodies of their natural motions.

XI. Carneades argued more acutely when he taught that the Epicureans might defend their cause without this imaginary declination of atoms. For when he taught that the soul might possess free-will, and a voluntary original motion of its own, that was a proposition much wiser to maintain

than to introduce an atomic declination, especially one for which no cause can be assigned. By means of this doctrine, these sages might easily parry all the arguments of Chrysippus. For in granting that there exists no motion without a cause, they need not grant that all which happens, does so by antecedent causes. Our will, for instance, is not submitted to antecedent and exterior causes. It is, therefore, an abuse of language to say that any one wills, or wills not, without cause. For in saying without cause, we mean without antecedent external cause, not without any cause whatever. As when we say that a vessel is empty, we do not mean empty in the sense of the natural philosopher, who denies the existence of absolute emptiness, but we merely mean that the vessel contains no water, wine, oil, or other liquor. So when we say that our soul is moved without cause, we mean without antecedent extrinsic cause, not independently of all cause whatever. As to an atom, when it moves through void space by its specific gravity, we may say that its motion has no cause, meaning no cause extrinsic to itself. Therefore not to expose ourselves to the ridicule of the natural philosophers by asserting that anything happens without a cause, we must distinctly propound that the nature of an atom is such that it may be moved by its own specific gravity, and that its intrinsic nature is the very cause of its motion. And in the same manner we need not seek for an external cause for the voluntary motions of the mind. For such is the nature of voluntary motion, that it must needs be in our own power, and depend on ourselves, otherwise it is not voluntary. And yet we cannot say that the motion of our free-will is an effect without a cause, for its proper nature is the cause of this effect. As, then, this is the case, why may not every proposition be either true or false, without our conceding that fate is the cause of all that happens? Because, says he, things certain to happen cannot be those which have no causes why they are certain to happen; they must, therefore, have causes in order that those things which are true, when they happen in that way, may so happen through fate.

XII. The dispute then is at an end, since you must needs grant either that all things happen by fate, or that some effects may exist without external causes. This proposition,

"Scipio shall take Numantia," cannot be true unless we admit that in order to produce this effect there was a specific cause bound to an eternal series of causes. Could this fact have been rendered false by being predicted 600 years before? But if this proposition, "Scipio shall take Numantia," was not true, then, even now that it is taken, it is not true. Can anything, then, possibly happen which was not certain to happen? For as we call past events true, the existence of which has been certified by experience, so may we call future events true which will assuredly be realized in the time to come. And though every proposition is either true or false, it need not follow at once that there exist eternal and immutable causes which prevent anything from happening in any other manner than that in which it does happen. There are fortuitous causes which ensure the certainty of those predictions which are uttered in this manner—"Cato shall enter the senate;" these causes not necessarily subsisting in the nature of things, and in the world. And yet the future is just as immutable, inasmuch as it is true, as what has already taken place; nor does this fact give us any reason to fear either fate or necessity. In fact we must confess in all such propositions, that if this statement, "Hortensius will come to Tusculum," is not true, then it follows that it is false. But these men will not admit either of these alternatives, but that denial is impossible to be maintained. Nor need we be deterred from this line of reasoning by the argument called the inactive one, or, by some philosophers, ἀργὸς λόγος, which, if we were to be led by it, would induce us to remain inactive all our lives. This argument may be thus stated,—"If it be the will of fate that you should free yourself from this disease, then whether you take medicine or not, you will free yourself equally." Again, "If it is the will of fate that you should not escape from your malady, whether you take medicine or not, you will not escape." Fate, therefore, is the regulator of both alternatives, and any application to a physician will be useless.

XIII. Very properly, therefore, is this argument called inactive, for if we adopt it, we must remain in absolute idleness, and abstain from all action whatever. We may change the statement of this argument, and omit the word fate, but still it comes to the same result. "If from all eternity this

proposition is true, You will escape from this malady; then whether you consult a physician or not, you will escape from it." Again; "If from all eternity this proposition is false, You will not recover from this disease; then you will not escape from it whether you consult a physician or not." This argument is rejected by Chrysippus. For, says he, we must distinguish between two kinds of propositions, the simple and the compound. For instance, this is a simple proposition, "Socrates shall die this day." Here, whether he does anything, or does not do so, the day of his death is definitively fixed. But if the fate spoken of is of this sort, "Laius shall beget Œdipus," then it cannot be said, whether Laius is with a woman or not, for it is a compound fact, and confatal, to use Chrysippus's expression, because it is fated, both that Laius will be with his wife, and that he will beget Œdipus. In the same way, if it is asserted, Milo will contend in the Olympic games, it would be absurd to reply that he must so contend whether he meets any antagonist or not; for the assertion, he will contend, is a copulative one, because there is no contest without an adversary. All sophisms of this nature are demolished in the same way. "Whether you consult a physician, or whether you do not, you will recover,' is captious; for it is as much fated that you shall consult a physician as that you shall recover.

XIV. Carneades, however, absolutely rejects this method of reasoning, and thinks that these conclusions are adopted too hastily. He therefore pushed his argument in a plainer manner, and avoided these subtleties. And his conclusions were formed in this way: "If everything happens by anterior causes, all these causes must be closely and compactly bound to each other by a natural connexion. Now if this is the case, necessity governs all things, we are no longer free agents, nothing is in our own power. But some things are in our own power: but if all things happen by fate, then all things happen by anterior causes: therefore all that happens does not happen by fate." This argument cannot be made more stringent. For if any one were to try to reply to it, and to argue thus: "If all which happens is true from all eternity, so that it must needs happen in a specific manner, then it follows inevitably that all things are closely and compactly bound together by a natural connexion:" he would

be in effect saying nothing; for there is an essential difference, whether a natural cause from eternity makes what is future true, or whether even without a natural eternity those things which are future can be recognised as true. And therefore Carneades declares that Apollo himself cannot predict, as certain to take place, any things except those whose causes are so contained in nature that they must eventually take place. For what can the Deity himself have beheld to make him say that that Marcellus, who was thrice consul, would perish in the sea? This event was indeed true from all eternity, but it had no efficient cause. Neither could those past events, which leave no signs or vestiges, be known in his opinion even to Apollo himself. How then can he know events which are future? for it is only by an acquaintance with efficient causes that we can foreknow the particular events which result from them. Therefore (says he) Apollo could not predict in the case of Œdipus that he would certainly destroy his father, because there existed no antecedent cause for such an event in nature.

XV. Wherefore if the Stoics, who maintain that everything happens by fate, are obliged in consistence with their principle to admit the truth of oracles of this kind, and of other things which come under the head of divination; but those who assert that all things which must happen are certain from all eternity, may, if they please, reject such consequences; then consider whether they do not, in fact, agree with the Stoics. Indeed, they are driven even to worse difficulties, for the theory of the others is free and unembarrassed in comparison. But if it be admitted that nothing can happen without some anterior cause, what is gained by that if this cause is not said to be linked to an infinite series of causes? By a cause we mean that which produces the effect caused; as a wound is the cause of death, indigestion of disease, and fire of heat. Thus we do not understand by a cause a mere antecedent, but an effective antecedent. Nor was my visiting the Campus Martius the cause of my playing at ball; nor was Hecuba the cause of the ruin of Troy, by giving birth to Paris; nor Tyndarus the author of Agamemnon's murder, because he was Clytemnestra's father. For by such logic as this a traveller who wears a handsome dress may become the cause why the highway-

man rŏbs him of it. And here lies the sophism of Ennius, where he says:—

> Oh, that the pine in Pelion's leafy grove,
> Had never fall'n beneath the woodman's axe!

He should have gone a step further and said, "Oh, that no tree had ever grown on Mount Pelion!" Or further still, "Oh, that Mount Pelion had never existed!" And thus tracing backwards further and further he might have gone on for ever. Again, he says:—

> And that no ship from that too fatal tree
> Had e'er been built.

But why enumerate all those past events? Because the consequence is as follows:—

> Then would my wandering mistress ne'er have set
> Her foot across her threshold. Sad Medea,
> Who now with agonized heart, frenzied with love. . . .

Now surely none of the antecedent circumstances mentioned by Ennius was the efficient cause of Medea's love.

XVI. But there is a difference, say they, between a cause without which an effect cannot happen, and a cause which necessarily produces an effect. Then there is no efficient cause of such events as they allude to, because none produces them by its efficient energy; and a thing is not a cause when without it the effect could not have happened, but when by its specific action it necessarily produces the effect caused. Before the wound of the serpent who bit Philoctetes changed into an ulcer, what reason was there in the nature of things why the Greeks should leave this hero in the isle of Lemnos? Afterwards this cause existed, and in much closer connexion with the event—and the event itself declared and manifested the cause. Reason, therefore, points out the cause of the event. But from all eternity this proposition was true, "Philoctetes shall be left in an island," nor could it be altered into a false one. For two contrary propositions (when I say contrary, I mean such that one affirms a thing, and the other denies it) which oppose each other can never stand together, for, in spite of Epicurus, one must be true and one false. Thus this proposition, "Philoctetes shall be wounded," was true before all ages; and the contrary, "He shall not be wounded," was false; unless, indeed, we adopt the opinion of the Epicureans, who affirm that such propositions are nĕither true nor false, or, when they are ashamed of that,

utter that still more impudent assertion, that disjunctive propositions composed of two contradictions are true, though neither of their component parts is true. Oh, marvellous licentiousness and miserable ignorance of logic! If anything in speech is so indifferent as to appear neither true nor false, that is certainly not true. That which is not true must of necessity be false, and that which is not false must be true. We must, therefore, maintain that doctrine which Chrysippus has proved, namely, that every proposition is either true or false. Reason itself will oblige us to grant, that there are things which are true from all eternity, that these things are not bound to eternal causes of necessity, and that they are free from the compulsion of fate.

XVII. It appears, indeed, to me, since the ancient philosophers are divided into two parties on the doctrine of fate; some of whom maintain that fate works all in all, and that it exerts a necessary and compulsive force over all agents; of which opinion were Democritus, Heraclitus, Empedocles and Aristotle; while others asserted that fate had no influence whatsoever over the voluntary acts of the soul; between these two opinions Chrysippus, as an honorary arbiter, holds a middle course; but he seems to approach nearest to those who believe the acts of the soul to be free from necessity. However, the expressions he employs throw him back into the very dilemma he seeks to avoid, so that in spite of himself he affirms the necessity of fate. Let us, therefore, return to the sentiments I formerly described. The acts of the soul, according to the opinion of those ancient philosophers who attributed all to fate, are the result of compulsion and necessity. Those who held the opposite system, believed the sentiments were free from the dominion of fate, and maintained that if we left the sentiments under the dominion of fate it would be impossible to preserve their freedom from the tyranny of necessity. They argue in this manner:—If all happens by fate, then every effect is determined by an anterior cause. If appetite be allowed, those things also must be allowed which follow appetite: and on the same principle thus it is with our sentiments. But if the cause of appetite does not depend on us, then, even the appetite itself is no longer in our own power. If the affair stands thus, the effects produced by appetite are no longer chargeable on ourselves.

Thus we lose all command both of our sentiments and actions. From which it follows that all praise and blame must be equally unjust, and all honours and punishments. And as this consequence is absurd, they conclude with much probability that all the events which happen are not the effects of fate.

XVIII. But Chrysippus, rejecting necessity, yet believing that nothing can happen without antecedent causes, distinguishes causes into two kinds, in order to preserve the doctrine of fate, and yet avoid that of necessity. There are, says he, certain absolute principal causes, and certain auxiliary proximate causes. When, therefore, we assert that all things happen by anterior causes, we do not so much allude to these absolute or principal causes, as to the auxiliary and proximate ones. He therefore meets the consequence which I have just mentioned in this manner. If, says he, everything happens by fate, I grant that all happens by pre-existent causes; but these pre-existent causes are not principal, but auxiliary. And if these latter ones are not in our power, we can no longer maintain that appetite itself is in our power. But this must needs be the case, if we say, that all happens by principal causes, since these causes being beyond our control, appetite is likewise beyond our control.

Those, therefore, who thus introduce fate, and join necessity with it, rush wildly into this absurd consequence, namely, the destruction of free-will. But those who admit antecedent causes without supposing them principal, have no such error to fear. In fact, nothing is more natural, according to these philosophers, than the manner in which the sentiments are produced by pre-existent causes. They grant that sentiments cannot arise without some corresponding action of the sense, yet they say that this action, having a proximate cause, not a principal one, takes place as Chrysippus conjectures; not that this sentiment can arise without some extrinsic cause, (for sentiment and sensation are connected,) but the causal force is perpetuated, as in the case of a revolving wheel or top, which cannot begin to move till the final impulse be given to them. But after they have received it, they continue their gyrations according to their form.

XIX. As then, says he, a man who pushes a cylinder gives it a principle of motion, but not immediately that of

revolution; so an object strikes our sense and conveys its image to our soul, yet leaves us free to form our specific sentiment concerning it; and, as has been said in the case of the cylinder which is set in motion from without, it will continue for the future to move according to its own proper force and nature. But if any effect were produced without an anterior cause, it would be true that all things happen by fate. If, however, it is probable that everything which happens has evidently an anterior cause, what reason can be given why we should not admit that all things happen by fate, provided it is understood what the distinction and dissimilarity of causes is? After this explanation of Chrysippus, if those who deny that our sentiments are the effects of fate were to concede that they are not produced without an anterior impression made on our senses, that would be one thing. But if they grant that an anterior impression is made on the sense, and yet that the sentiments are not the effects of fate, since the proximate cause does not excite them specifically, both parties will agree to such a statement. For Chrysippus, in granting that the proximate cause of sentiment is in the impression made on the sense, does not imply that this was the necessary cause of its specific character. So that though all happens by fate, he still denies that all happens by necessary and compulsory causes. And they who differ from him, granting that no sentiment arises without a corresponding motion of sense, declare that if all happens by fate in such a manner that nothing takes place without a pre-existent cause, we must needs admit that all things take place by fate. Thus we may understand how both these contending disputants, when they have fairly explained their systems, arrive at the same essential result, and only differ in terms. And since the main points are admitted by both sides, we may affirm with confidence that when certain causes precede certain effects we cannot hinder these effects from happening. In other cases, on the contrary, though certain causes pre-exist, we have the moulding of their effects in our own power. Such is the distinction recognised by both sides; but some imagine that those things whose causes so precede as to deprive us of the power of moulding the effect, are submitted to the empire of fate, but that those which depend on ourselves are free from it. . . . . .

XX. It is according to these principles that we should examine the question concerning fate, and not rush with Epicurus to a fortuitous concourse of atoms to help us out of our difficulty. Every atom has a motion of its own, says he. In the first place, why is it so? It possesses a peculiar energy; that force, for example, of Democritus, which this philosopher terms an impulse, and which Epicurus calls gravity or weight. But you have not yet discovered that primitive power in nature from which your atoms derive their motion. Do they cast lots with one another which shall move this way and which that way? If they can thus move through small spaces, they may move through great ones, and the spaces of their movements may be multiplied to infinity. To make such assertions as these, is rather to beg the question than to discuss it. You have not yet revealed to us any extrinsic cause which impresses each atom with that impulse which gives it its proper direction. In the empty space which your atom occupies, I see nothing to prevent it from precipitating itself for ever in a perpendicular line; and in the atom itself I discover no quality which can counteract its specific gravity, or rescue it from falling. However, though Epicurus refuses to assign any cause for his atomic motion, he thinks he has started a very noble theory, when he has thrown out that sophism, which all men of sense despise and reject. Nor do I think it possible for any one to give greater support to the arguments of fate and necessity and universal compulsion, or more completely to deprive the soul of all freedom of volition, than Epicurus has done, when he confesses that he could never otherwise have resisted fate if he had not taken refuge in these imaginary declinations. For even though there were such things as atoms, which he can never prove to me, those declinations could never be explained. For if these atoms are moved and agitated by their specific gravity according to the necessity of nature, since it is the law of all heavy bodies to move and proceed till they meet some opposing obstacle, this also follows inevitably, that these atoms, some, if not all of them. . . . . .

[*The rest of this treatise is lost.*]